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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of New Haven Issues New Guidance on School Sports

NEW HAVEN, Conn. – Today the City of New Haven Health Department issued guidance on school fall sports for the upcoming school year surrounding safety with the COVID-19 pandemic. Director of Public Health for the City, Maritza Bond, issued a letter to New Haven Public School parents.

“I know how important sports are to the lives of so many students and families. I can assure you that this decision was not made lightly. We must ensure the safety and health of our students and community so that we can overcome the virus and get back to normal life sooner,” said New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker.

New Haven Public School Superintendent Dr. Ilene Tracey released the following statement, “New Haven Public Schools takes the health, safety, and welfare of all our students seriously. I know how sports have become an important fabric of school and community life and culture. However, with the COVID 19 pandemic still here, we want to be confident that we educate our students in a safe way. The State and local Health Departments have determined that contact sports are not safe for our students at this juncture. I want to thank them for taking this action on behalf of our students and families,” she concluded.

The following letter from Health Director Maritza Bond reads:

August 14, 2020

To All Parents and Guardians of Student Athletes

The City of New Haven Health Department continues to closely monitor COVID-19 activity and trends in our community and across the country. In collaboration with the New Haven Public Schools, this data is reviewed so that we can take whatever action is necessary to protect the health and safety of all students and staff. Under these challenging circumstances, it is necessary for the City to make decisions regarding the wisdom of allowing for school sporting events involving both moderate and high risk sports to be held at this time, particularly given the recommendations of the Department of Public Health that such activities be postponed for until Spring 2021.

Moderate risk sports fall into three categories: (1) those that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants or (2) those sports that involve intermittent close contact or group sports or (3) those sports that use equipment that cannot be cleaned between participants.

Examples of moderate risk sports as defined by the CDC guidance and under the Reopen CT guidance include: volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, water polo, gymnastics, ice hockey, field hockey, tennis, swimming relays, pole vault, high/long jump, girls lacrosse, crew with two or more rowers.

High risk sports are those that involve close, sustained contact between athletes without significant protective barriers, creating a high risk that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. These sports also require shared equipment and gear which can cause the virus to be transmitted. Social distancing is also difficult to maintain during games/practices/scrimmages for these sports.

Examples of high-risk sports as defined by the CDC and under the Reopen Connecticut guidance include wrestling, football, basketball, boy's lacrosse, competitive cheer, and dance.

Therefore, the City of New Haven will only permit conditioning training for high risk and moderate risk sports. Following the issued August 13, 2020 letter from the Department of Public Health recommendation letter, games or practices that involve physical contact will not be allowed at this time.

We recognize that this decision will come as a disappointment to many parents and students. We will continue to monitor the status of the pandemic and keep families updated as information becomes available.

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